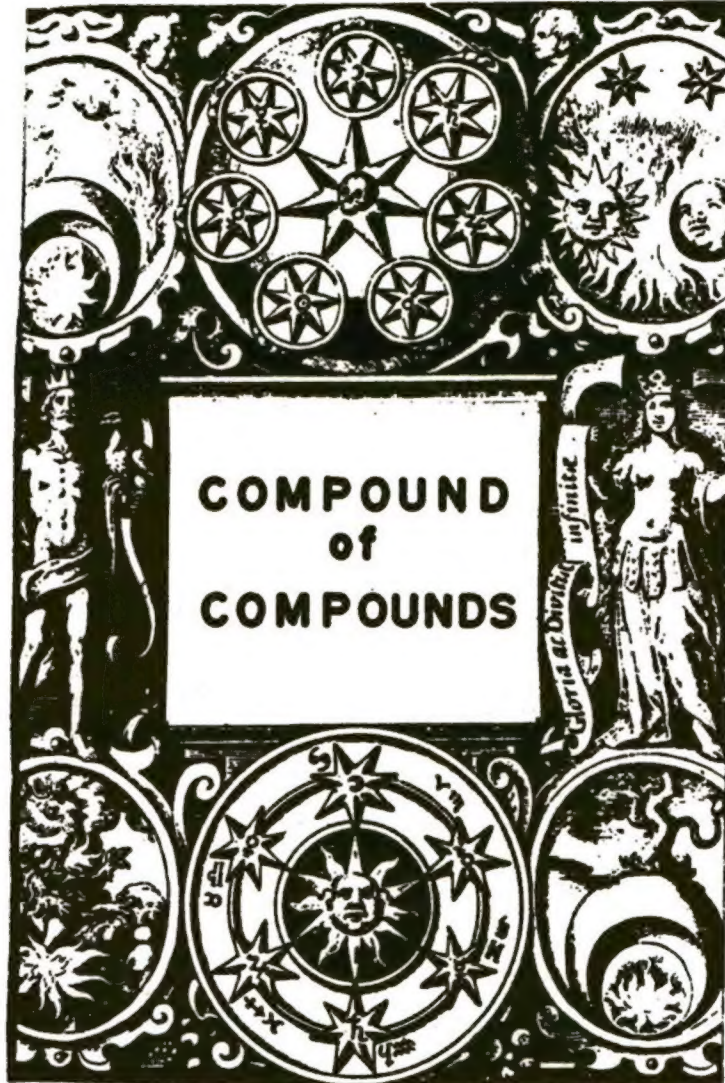


ALBERTUS MAGNUS



Translated from the French by: LYNN BACARELLA, 1978

A 1977

RAMS

PRODUCTION

PREFACE

I will not hide a science which was revealed to me by the grace of God; I will not jealously guard it for myself alone, for fear of drawing His curse. A science kept secret, a hidden treasure, what is it's use? The science I have learned without invention, I transmit to you without regret. Envy disrupts everything, an envious man cannot be just before God. All science, all knowledge comes from God; it is a simple way of speaking to indicate that it comes from the Holy Spirit. No one can say: Our Lord Jesus Christ without also understanding: Son of God the Father, through the operation of the Holy Spirit. In the same way, this science of truth cannot be separated from Him who communicated it to me.

I have not been sent to all, but only to those who admire the Lord in his works and whom God judges worthy. Only whosoever has ears to hear His divine communication receives the secrets which have been transmitted to me by the grace of God, and these He never reveals to those who are unworthy.

Nature must serve as the foundation and the mode of science:

the Art also works according to Nature as far as it can. It is necessary then, that the Artist observe Nature and operate as she operates.

CHAPTER I

OF THE FORMATION OF THE METALS GENERALLY FROM THE SULFUR AND THE MERCURY

It is observed that the essence of metals, insofar as we know, is to be produced in a general manner from Sulfur and Mercury. The differences alone of cooking and digestion results in a diversification of the metallic nature. I personally observed that in a single vessel, in the same vein, so to speak, nature had produced many metals, along with some silver disseminated here and there. We have clearly demonstrated in our treatise on minerals that the generation of metals is circular, that is, one passes easily from one to another following a circle, the cousin metals having similar properties; it is because of this that silver changes more readily into gold than any other metal.

Indeed, there is not much in changing the color and weight of silver, this is easy, because a compact substance increases its weight quite readily. And since it contains a yellowishwhite Sulfur, its color will also be easy to transform.

It is the same with other metals. The Sulfur is, so to speak, their father and the Mercury, their mother.

Again, it is most true, if one says of it that in the union the Sulphur represents the sperm of the father and that the Mercury acts as a coagulated Menstruum in order to form the embryonic

substance. The sulphur cannot alone produce, just as the father alone cannot produce.

In the same way that the male begets his proper substance, in mixture with the menstrual blood, likewise the Sulphur produces with the Mercury, but alone it produces nothing. By this comparison we make note that the Alchemist will have to raise at the outset, the specificity of the metal which has given him the Nature, then that he proceeds as nature proceeded, with the Mercury and the Sulphur prepared and purified always following the example of Nature.

THE SULPHUR CONTAINS THREE HUMID PRINCIPLES.

The first of these principles is especially elevated and volatile, one finds it in the exterior parts of the Sulphur, for the same reason, that of the great volatility of its elements, which ignite easily and consume the bodies with which they come into contact.

The second principle is phlegmatic, otherwise called aqueous; it is found in close association with the former. The third is radical, fixed, adherent to the internal parts. That one alone is general, and one cannot separate it from the others without destroying the whole edifice. The first principle does not resist the fire; being combustible, it consumes itself in the fire and calcines the substance of the metal with which one heats it. Therefore, it is not only useless, but detrimental besides, to the goal which we set ourselves. The second principle does not make the bodies moist, it does not produce, it cannot serve us at all. The third is radical, it penetrates all the particles of the matter which are necessary to its essential properties.

It is necessary to rid the Sulphur of the first two principles in order that the subtilty of the third force serve us in making a perfect compound.

The fire is nothing other than the vapor of the Sulphur; the vapor of the Sulphur, well purified and sublimed white and rendered very compact. Also the Alchemists are accustomed to skillfully raising the two superfluous principles in the Sulphur by way of acid baths, such as vinegar of lemons, sour milk, the milk of goats, the urine of infants, etc. They purify it by lixiviation, digestion and sublimation. It is necessary, finally, to rectify it by reduction in a manner so as not to have more than one pure substance containing the active, perfectible brother-force of the metal. Behold! We are in possession of one part of our work.

OF THE NATURE OF THE MERCURY

The Mercury contains two superfluous substances, the earth and the water. The earthy substance has something of the Sulphur, the fire reddens it. The aqueous substance has superfluous humidity. One easily rids the Mercury of its watery and earthy impurities by sublimation and very acid baths. Nature separates it into the dry state of the Sulphur and robs it of its earth by the heat of the Sun and the Stars.

It obtains thus a pure Mercury, completely free of its earthy substance, containing no more foreign particles. It unites it then with a pure Sulphur and produces in the end the pure and perfect metals in the heart of the earth. If the two principles are impure, the metals are imperfect. This is why one finds

different metals in the mines, which possess of the purification and of the digestion according to their rudiments. This is dependent on the cooking.

OF THE ARSENICK

The Arsenick is of the same nature as the Sulphur; both tint to red and to white. But there is more humidity in the Arsenick, and it sublimes less rapidly over the fire than the Sulphur.

One knows how well Sulphur sublimes quickly and how it consumes all the bodies, except Gold. The Arsenick can unite its dry principle with that of the Sulphur, they temper each other, and once united, one separates them only with difficulty, their tincture is toned down by this union.

"The Arsenick", says Geber, "contains much of the Mercury; it can also be prepared like it". Know that the Spirit hidden in the Sulphur, the Arsenick and the animal oil, is named by the philosophers, The White Elixir. It is unique, miscible with the volatile substance, from this one we extract the red Elixir; it unites with the melted metals, thus as we have experimented with it, it purifies them. Not only because of the aforementioned properties, but also because there is one common proportion between its elements.

The metals differ between themselves according to .the purity of impurity of the first matter, sp to speak, of the Sulphur and of the Mercury, and also according to the degree (temperature) of the fire which produced them.

According to philosophy, the Elixir is also called Medicine, because one assimilates the body of metals in the body of animals.

Also we say that there is a hidden Spirit in the Sulphur, the Arsenick and the oil extract of the animal substances. It is that spirit for which we search, with whose aid we will tint all the imperfect bodies to perfection. This Spirit is called Water and Mercury by the Philosophers. "The Mercury", says Geber, "is a medicine composed of the dry and the humid, the humid and the dry".

You understand the succession of operations: extract the earth from the fire, the air from the earth, the water from the air, since the water can resist the fire. It is necessary to mark well these teachings, they are Universal Secrets.

None of the principles which enter into the Work have strength by themselves; for they are linked in the Metals, they cannot be perfected, they are not very fixed. Each lacks two substances, one miscible with the metals in fusion, the other fixed which enables it to coagulate and fix. Also Rhases said: "There are

four substances which change in season: each one of these is composed of the four elements and takes the name of the dominant element. Their marvelous essence was fixed in one body, and, with this last, one can nourish the other bodies. This essence is composed of water and of air, combined in such a way that the heat liquifies them. Here it is: a marvelous secret. The minerals employed in Alchemy must, in order to serve us, have an action upon the melted bodies. The stones which we use are four in number, two tint to white, the two others to red. Also: the white, the red, the Sulphur, the Arsenick and Saturn have only that one same body! But in this single body, what obscurities! And at first it is without action upon the perfect metals".

In the imperfect bodies, there is an acid water, bitter, harsh, necessary to our Art. As it dissolves and mortifies the bodies, it then revives them and recomposes them. Rhases says in his third letter: Those who search our Entelechie, ask from whence the bitter aqueous fundamental comes. We answer them: from the impurity of the metals. Because the water contained in Gold is sweet, it does not dissolve, on the contrary, it coagulates and fortifies, because it contains neither acidity nor impurity like the imperfect bodies". This is why Geber said: "One calcines and dissolves the gold and silver in vain, because our vinegar takes from the four imperfect bodies; this is the mortifying and dissolving spirit which mixes the tinctures of all the bodies that we employ in the Work. We neednothlraqbut this water, of little importance to us are the other Spirits".

Geber is right; we have not to make a tincture for the fire to adulterate. Actually, on the contrary, it is necessary that the fire give it excellence and strength in order that it can ally itself withthe melted metals. It is necessary that it strengthen, that it fix, that despite thefusion, it rests intimately united with the metal.

I will add that from the four imperfect bodies, one can extract all. As for the manner of preparing the Sulphur, the Arsenick, and the Mercury most highly acclaimed, one can bring it forth here.

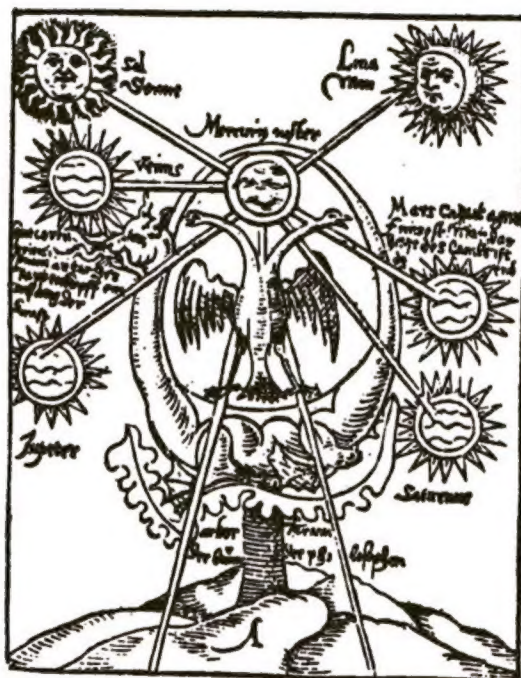
Indeed, when in this preparation we heat the spirit of the Sulphur and of the Arsenick, with the acid waters or the oil, for in extracting this volatile essence, the oil or unctuousity, we raise them above that which is superfluous to them; it leaves us the volatile force and the oil, these things alone are those which

are useful to us; but they are mixed in the acid water which served us in purifying, there is no means of separating these, but at least we are rid of the useless. It is necessary therefore, to find another means to extract from these bodies in order to obtain the water, the oil, and the very subtle spirit of the Sulphur which is the true very active Tincture for which we search. We will work so with the bodies in separating by decomposition or yet by distillation of their natural component parts, and we will arrive thus at the simple parts. Some, ignoring the composition of the Magistery want to work on the Mercury alone, asserting that it has one body, one soul, one spirit, and that it is the first matter of gold and silver. It is necessary to respond to them on the truth which several philosophers affirm, that the Work is made up of three things; The Spirit, the Body and the Soul, extracted from one only. But for the other part, one cannot find in something that which is not there. Now, the Mercury does not have the red tincture, therefore, it alone cannot suffice to form the body of the Sun; it will be impossible for us with only the Mercury to direct the Work to a good end. The Moon alone cannot suffice, meanwhile this body is, so to speak, the foundation of the Work.

In whatever manner that one works and transforms the Mercury, never will it be able to establish a body. They say also: "One finds in the Mercury a red Sulphur, therefore it contains the red tincture." ERROR! The Sulphur is the father of the metals, one never finds it in the Mercury which is female!

A passive matter cannot fertilize itself. The Mercury contains

indeed a Sulphur, but, as we have already said, it is an earthy Sulphur. We remark finally, that the Sulphur cannot support the fusion; therefore, the Elixir cannot be extracted from one thing only.



Mercurius Noster: alchemistic-symbolic representation of quicksilver, or mercury, as one of the planets which is the source and cause of all transmutation

OF THE PUTREFACTION

Fire prodttices death and life. A Light fire dries the body. Here is the reason: Fire, coming into contact with a body, sets into motion the element similar to itself which exists in this body.

This element is The Natural Heat. The former one excites the fiery part of the body in the first place; there is a conjunction and the radical humidity of the body rises to the surface while the fire works on the exterior. Those diverse portions of the body are gone which the radical humidity united, the dead body is dissolved, is resolved, all its parts separated one from the other. The fire works here like a cutting instrument. That which it dries and contracts of itself, it can do only so long as there is a certain predisposition in the body, especially if the body is compact like one element. The last one needs a fixed agglutinate, which will have separated from the body before corruption. All this can be done by the Sun, because it is in one nature hot and humid, through affinity with the other bodies.

OF THE REGIMEN OF THE STONE

There are four stages of the Stone: 1) to decompose; 2) to wash; 3) to contract; 4) to fix. In the first stage, one separates the natures because without division, without purification, there cannot be a conjunction. During the second stage, the separate elements are washed, purified, and restored to the simple state. In the third, one changes our Sulphur to the mineral of the Sun, of the Moon and of the other metals. In the fourth, all the bodies formerly extracted from our Stone are united, recomposed and fixed so as to rest conjointly henceforth.

There are some who count five stages in the Magistry: 1) to resolve the substance to their first matter; 2) to introduce our earth, the black magnesium, so to speak, as being related to the nature of the Sulphur and the Mercury; 3) also to render the Sulphur as close.as possible to the mineral matter of the Sun and of the Moon; 4) to compose of the several things a white Elixir; 5) to cook perfectly the white Elixir to give it the color of cinnabar, starting there in order to make the red Elixir.

Finally, there are some who count four stages in the Work, others three, others two only. These last count thus: setting up the work and purification of the elements; and 2) conjunction.

Mark well that which~follows: The substance of the Stone of the Philosophers is common: one finds it everywhere, it is a viscous water like the Mercury that one extracts from the earth. Our

viscous water is found everywhere, eben in the Latrines, certain philosophers have said. And, several imbeciles take their words literally, searching for it in the excrements!

Nature operates on this matter in raising something from it. its earthy principle, and in uniting something with it, the Sulphur of the Philosophers, which is not the vulgar sulphur, but a transparaent Sulphur of a red tint. For to speak the truth, it is the Spirit of Roman Vitriol. Prepare it thus: take of Salpeter and of Roman Vitriol, two pounds of each; pulverize finely.*Hence, Aristotle is right when he says in his fourth book of the meteors: "All the Alchemists know that one cannot in any way change the form of the metals, of one does not first reduce them to their first matter". This is easy as one will shortly see. Philosophy says that one cannot go from one extreme to the other without an intermediary. At one extremity of our Philosophical Stone, are two luminaries, gold and silver; at the other extremity, the perfect elixir or tincture, and in the middle, the Philosophical Water of Life, naturally purified, cooked and digested.

All these things are near to perfection and preferable to the more primitive bodies of nature. Likewise, by means of average heat, the ice dissolves into water, for we have formerly had water. Thus, the metals are resolved to their first matter which is our Water of Life. The preparation is indicated in the chapters that follow. By itself alone, it can reduce all the metallic bodies to their first matter.

* (And do what with this? Heat in a flask and distill? -- hwn)

CHAPTER IV
OF THE SUBLIMATION OF THE MERCURY

In the name of God, procure yourself a pound of pure mercury issuing from the mine. Of the other portion, take of Roman Vitriol and of common calcined salt, pulverize and mix well. Put these two latest matters into a large glazed earthenware flask and set over a mild fire until the matter begins to melt and flow. Then take your mineral mercury, put it in a flask with a long neck and drop-by-drop, pour it over the vitriol and salt in fusion. Stir with a wooden spatula until the mercury is completely consumed and it leaves no trace. When it has completely disappeared, dry the matter over a gentle fire during the night. The next morning, you will take the well-dried matter and pulverize it finely on a stone. Place the pulverized matter in a sublimating flask called an Aludel, to sublime according to the Art. Place on it the head of the vessel, and close the joints with a philosophical luting, so that the mercury cannot escape. Place the Aludel in a furnace and seal it in so it cannot tilt over but stands straight. Then make a little fire for about four hours to drive away the humidity of the mercury and of the vitriol. After the evaporation of the humidity, increase the fire so that the pure white matter of the mercury separates itself from the impurities; do this for four hours; you will see if it suffices by introducing a wooden rod to the sublimating flask by way of the principle opening, you will lower it just to the matter and determine whether or not the white matter (Mercury Sublimate -- hwn) of the Mercury is uppermost in the mixture. If it is, raise the baton, close the aperture of the head with a luting so that the mercury cannot

escape, and increase the fire in such a way that the white matter of the mercury rises above the feces in the Aludel. Do this for four hours. Finally, heat with wood in a manner to obtain a blaze: it is necessary that the bottom of the flask and the residue becomes red. Continue thusly until there remains a little of the white substance of the Mercury adherent to the feces. The force and the violence of the fire will be spent during the separation.

Stop the fire, allow the furnace and the matter to cool overnight. The next morning, return the flask to the furnace, lift the luting with caution in order not to sully the mercury, open the apparatus. If you find a white matter, sublimed, pure, compact, heavy, then you have succeeded. But if the sublimate was spongey, light, porous, collect it and recommence the sublimation on the residue adding new pulverized common salt. Operate in the same flask over the furnace, in the same manner, with the same very high degree of fire. Then open the flask, see if the sublimate is white, compact, dense. Then collect it and put it carefully aside so that it may serve you when you have need to finish the Work. But if again it has not occurred as it should, you will have to sublime it a third time until you obtain it pure, compact, white and heavy.

Notice that by this operation you have raised two impurities from the Mercury. At first you removed from it all its superfluous humidity; in the second, you have rid it of its impure earthy parts which remained in the feces. Thus, you have now sublimed it to a clear semi-fixed substance.

Put this aside as one has recommended to you.

CHAPTER V
OF THE PREPARATION OF THE WATERS FROM WHICH YOU WILL DERIVE THE
WATER OF LIFE

Take two pounds of Roman Vitriol, two pounds of Saltpeter, one pound calcined Alum. Crush well, mix perfectly, put in a glass Alembic. Distill the water according to ordinary procedures, closing the joints well, lest the spirits escape. Begin with a gentle fire, then heat more forcefully; afterwards heat with wood until, the apparatus becomes white, so that all the spirits distill. Then, stop the fire. Let the furnace cool. Put this carefully aside, for this is the Solvent of the Moon. Conserve it for the Work; it dissolves the silver and separates it from the gold. It calcines the Mercury and the crocus of Mars; it gives to the skin of a man, a brown coloration which is hard to get rid of. This is the prime water of the philosophers, it is perfect to the first degree. You will prepare three pounds of the water.

SECOND WATER PREPARED BY WAY OF SAL AMMONIAC

In the name of God, get one pound of the first water and therein dissolve four parts of pure and uncolored Sal Ammoniac. The dissolution done, the water will change color. It has acquired other properties. The prime water was greenish, it dissolved the Moon, it was without action on the Sun; but as soon as one adds to it from the sal ammoniac, it takes on a yellow color. It dissolves gold, mercury and sulphur sublimate, and gives a strong yellow coloration to the skin of a man. Conserve this water precious, because it will serve us in the work.

THIRD WATER PREPARED BY MEANS OF MERCURY SUBLIMATE

Take one pound of the second water and eleven parts of Mercury sublimate (by the Roman Vitriol and the salt) well prepared and very pure. You will pour the Mercury, little-by-little, into the second water. Then you will seal up the orifice of the flask lest the spirit of the Mercury escape. Place the flask over lukewarm cinders; the water will begin immediately to act on the Mercury, dissolving it and incorporating it. Leave the flask over the warm cinders. An excess of water must not remain and it will be necessary that the Mercury sublimate dissolve entirely. The water acts on the Mercury by soaking until it has dissolved it.

If the water cannot dissolve all the Mercury, you will take that which remains in the bottom of the flask, dry it over a slow heat, pulverize it and dissolve it in a new quantity of second water. You will repeat this operation until all the Mercury sublimate be dissolved in the water. You will reunite all these solutions in one very clean flask alone. Then close the opening with the seal of Hermes (wax). Put this carefully aside, for this is our third water, philosophical, dense, perfect to the third degree. This is the mother of the Water-of-Life which reduces all the bodies into their first matter.

FOURTH WATER WHICH REDUCES THE CALCINED BODIES TO THEIR FIRST MATTERS

Take of the third mercuric water, perfected to the third degree, pellucid; put it to putrefy in the belly of a horse, in a flask with a long neck, clean, well-sealed, for fourteen days.

Leave it to ferment, the impurities drop to the bottom and the water passes from yellow to red. At this time, you will retrieve the flask and you will put it over the cinders of a very mild fire. Adapt to it the head of the alembic with a recipient. Begin the distillation slowly. That which passes, bit-by-bit, is our Water-of-Life. A very clear, pure, heavy, virginal milk, a very sour Vinegar. Continue the fire gently until all the water of life has distilled gradually over. Then, stop the fire, let the furnace cool and conserve with care your distilled water. This is IT. Our Water-of-Life, Vinegar of the Philosophers, virginal Milk which reduces the bodies to their first matter. It was given an infinity of names.

Here are the properties of this water: a little bit deposited on a thin plate of hot copper, penetrates it immediately and leaves there a white stain. Thrown over the coals, it emits a smoke. In air it congeals and resembles ice. When one distills this water, all the drops don't pass following the same path, rather, some pass here, other there. It does not work on the metals like strong corrosive water, which dissolves them, but it reduces to Mercury all the bodies that it bathes, just as you will see much later.

After the putrefaction, the distillation, the clarification, it is pure and very perfect. Free from every volatile, superfluous and corrosive principle. It is not a water which consumes, it does not dissolve the bodies but reduces them to Mercury. It owes this property to the original Mercury dissolved and putrefied to the third stage of perfection. It neither contains any feces nor earthy impurities. The last distillation separated them, the black im-

purities are resting at the bottom of the alernbic. The color of this water is reddish-blue, clear; put it aside. Thus, it reduces all the calcined and putrefied bodies to their prime matter.

WHEN YOU WANT TO REDUCE THE CALCINED BODIES WITH THIS WATER, PREPARE THE BODIES THUSLY:

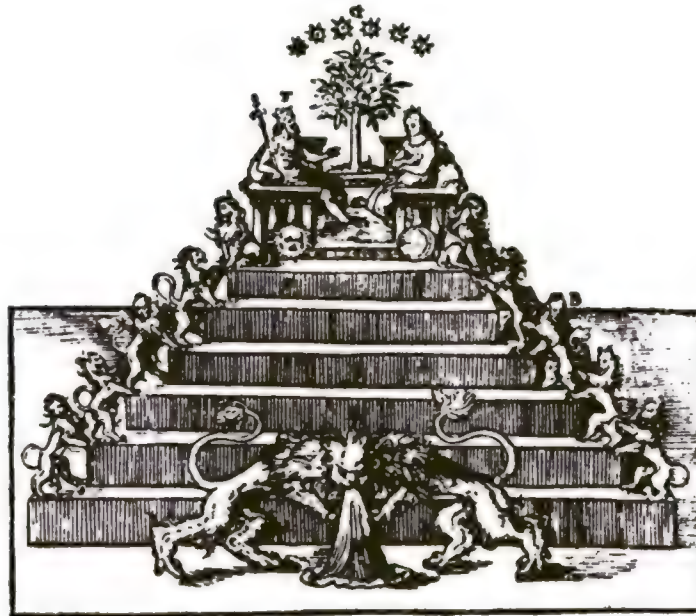
Take some of the body that you will want, Sun or Moon, and file it very fine. Pulverize this well using a stone prepared with common salt. Separate the salt by dissolving it in hot water. The pulverized lime will re-settle at the bottom of the liquid. Decant. Dry the lime, soak it three times in oil of Tartar, allowing the lime to absorb all the oil each time. Finally, put the lime in a little flask; pour over it the oil of Tartar, so that the liquid has a depth of two fingers, then close the flask. Put it to putrefy in the belly of a horse for eight days. Then take the flask, decant the oil and dry the lime. This done, put the lime into an equal amount of our Water-of-Life. Close the flask and let it digest over a very mild fire until all the lime be converted into Mercury. Decant, then, the water with caution. Recover the corporeal Mercury; put it in a glass vessel, putrefy it with water and common salt. Dry according to the laws, put it in a fine linen and squeeze it out in drops. If it passes in its entirety, it is good. If some portion of the amalgamate body remains, indicating that the dissolution has not been complete, put the residue with a new quantity of the consecrated water. Know that the distillation of the water must be done in a water-bath; for the air and the fire, one will distill over hot cinders. The water must be derived from the humid substance and not otherwise; the air and the fire must be an extract of the dry substance and none other.

CHAPTER VI
PROPERTIES OF THIS MERCURY

It is less mobile, it flows less quickly than the other Mercury; it leaves traces of its fixed body in the fire: one drop placed on a thin plate heated to red leaves a residue.

MULTIPLICATION OF THE PHILOSOPHICAL MERCURY

When you have your philosophical Mercury, take two portions of it and one portion of the filings mentioned much earlier. Make an amalgamate of these by cooking them together in a flask that has been well sealed and placed over cinders of a temperate fire. The entire will resolve into Mercury. You will therefore want to increase this to infinity, because the amount of the volatile always exceeds the amount of the fixed. It increases indefinitely giving to it its proper nature and there is always enough.



—The Bath of the Philosophers.
From *Commentariorum Alchymiae*, Libavius, 1606.

Now you know how to prepare the Water-of-Life, you understand some of the stages and the properties, you understand the putrefaction of the metallic bodies, their reduction to the prime matter, the multiplication of the matter to infinity. I clearly explained to you all that which the Philosophers hid with care.

It is not the vulgar Mercury, it is the first matter of the Philosophers. It is aqueous, cold, a humid element; it is a permanent water, it is the spirit of the body, an oily vapor, consecrated Water, strong water, Water of the Sages, Vinegar of the Philosophers, mineral water, Rose of the Celestial Grace; it has many other names besides these and indeed, msny they be that are different! However, they all designate one and the same thing which is the Mercury of the Philosophers. It is the foce of Alchemy; alone it can serve to make the tincture, the white and the red, etc. etc.

Take then, in the name of Jesus Christ, our venerable M.,⁵⁵ Water of the Philosophers, original HYLE of the Sages; it is the stone that one revealed for you in this treatise. It is the first matter of the perfect body, as you have determined. Put your matter in a furnace, into a clean vessel, clear transparent and round, whose opening you will hermetically seal, so that nothing can escape. Your matter is to be placed on a level bed or surface, slightly hot. You will leave it there for one Philosophical month. Maintain the heat evenly, so that the perspiration of the matter will sublime, until it sweats no longer, that nothing rises or descends. That it begins to putrefy, to suffocate, to coagulate and to fix by maintaining

the constancy of the fire. It will not raise more of the exalted, smoky substance, and our Mercury will remain on the bottom, dry, robbed of its humidity, putrefied, coagulated, changed to a black earth, that one calls Head of the Raven, a dry and earthy element.

When you have done this, you will have accomplished the genuine sublimation of the Philosophers, during this you will have examined all the aforementioned stages, to wit: sublimation of the Mercury, distillation, coagulation, fixation, in one only vessel and with one only furnace as was stated.

Indeed when our stone is in its vessel, and it is increased (or multiplied--hwn), one says that there is sublimation or ascension. When afterwards it again settles to the bottom, one says that there is distillation or precipitation. Next, when after the distillation and sublimation, our stone begins to putrefy and to coagulate, it is the putrefaction and the coagulation; finally when it calcines and fixes through the loss of its radical, aqueous humidity, it is the calcination and fixation; all this is done through the single act of heating, in a single furnace, in a single vessel, as was said.

This sublimation constitutes a genuine separation of the elements, according to the Philosophers: "The Work of Our Stone consists only of the Separation and the Conjunction of the elements; because in our sublimation, the aqueous, cold and humid element changes to a dry, earthy and hot element". It follows that the separation of the elements of our stone is not vulgar, but philosophical: our single, very perfect sublimation indeed suffices to separate the elements. In our stone there is the

orm of only two elements, the water and the earth, which potentially contain the other two. The Earth potentially (or virtually) contains the Fire, because of its dryness; the Water potentially contains the Air because of its humidity. It is thus quite evident that although our stone has only the form of two elements, it potentially contains all four.

Also a Philosopher said of it: "There is not a separation of the four elements in our stone like the imbeciles think. Our nature contains a very hidden secret; thus one sees the power and the strength, the earth and the water. it contains two other elements, the air and the fire. However, these are neither visible nor tangible, one cannot represent them, one ignores their influence, they disclose nothing which does not manifest in the two other elements, earth and water, when the fire changes the colors during the digestion".

Behold that by the Grace of God, you have the second component of the Philosophical stone; which is the Black Earth, the Head of a Crow, mother, heart, origin of the other colours. From this earth, as the one body, all the rest take their birth. This dry earthy element received in the books of the Philosophers many names. One calls it foul Laton, black residue, Brass of the Philosophers, Nummus, black sulfur, male, husband, etc. Despite this endless variety of names, it is the single and same thing always, derived from a single matter. Because the Philosophical sublimation resulted in a deprivation of humidity, the volatile became fixed, the soft became hard and the aqueous became earthy, according to Geber.

This is the metemorphosis of the nature, the changing of the

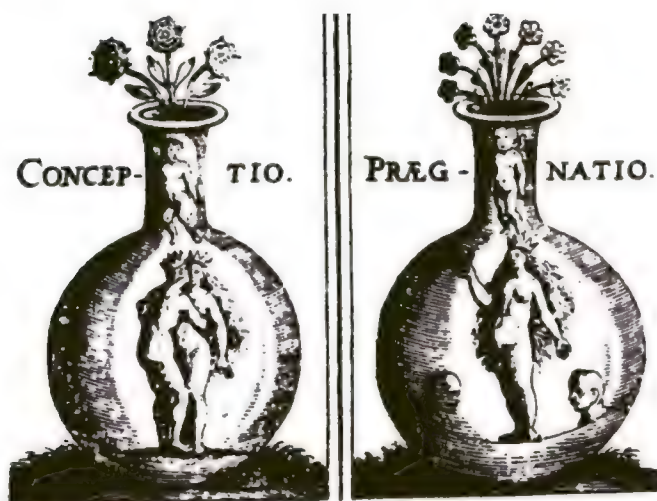
water to fire, according to la Tourbe. It is also the changing of the cold and humid constitutions to bilious, dry constitutions, according to the doctors. Aristotle says that the spirit took a body, and Alphidius says that the liquid became viscous. The hidden became manifest, says Rudianus in the Book of the Three Words. One now understand the Philosophers when they say:

"Our great Work is not other than a permutation of nature, an evolution of the elements". It is quite evident that by this deprivation of humidity, we render the stone dry, the volatile becomes fixed, the spirit becomes corporeal, the liquid becomes solid, the fire changes to water, the air to earth. We have thus changed the true natures following a certain order, we have permuted their natures. That God be eternally blessed! Amen.

Let us now pass, with the permission of God, to the second operation which is the whitening of our pure earth. Take then, two parts of the fixed earth or Head of a Raven: digest it subtly with precaution in an excessively clean mortar. Add to it one part of the Philosophical water that you know of. (That which you have put aside). Unite these by imbibing the dry earth little by little into the water until its (her) thirst is quenched. Digest (cook) and mix well enough that the union of the body, of the soul and of the water be perfect and intimate. This done, you will put all of it in a hermetically sealed flask so that nothing will escape. Place the flask over a little warm bed, always hot and kept level, so that in sweating, its entrails are rid of the liquid which it drank. You will leave it there eight days until the earth whitens somewhat.

You will then take the Stone, you will pulverize it, soak it a-

gain in the virginal milk, stirring, until its thirst is quenched. Put it again in the flask over its warm little bed so that it dries like that above. You will repeat this operation four times following the same order: The soaking of the earth by water until perfect union, dessication and calcination. You will then have sufficiently digested the earth of our very precious stone. In following this order, digestion, pulverization, imbibing of water, dessication, calcination, you sufficiently purified the Head of the Raven, the black and foetid earth, you have brought it to whiteness by the strength of the fire, of the heat, and the whitened water. Gather your white earth and put it carefully aside. This is very precious because it is the foliated white earth, white Sulphur, white Magnesium, etc. Morien speaks of it when he says: "Put this earth with its water to putrefy so that it purifies, and with the aid of God you will finish the Magistery". Hermes says the same as Azoth, wash the Laton and raise it from all its impurities. In this latest operation, we reproduced a genuine conjunction of the elements, because the water united with the earth, the air with the fire. It is this union of the man with the woman, of the male with the female, of the gold with the silver, of the dry sulphur and the impure celestial water.



There was also a resurrection of dead bodies. This is why the Philosophers said: "Those who do not know how to kill and how to revive, abandon the Art". And elsewhere: "Those who know how to kill and how to revive, will profit from our science. This one will be the Prince of the Art who will do these two things". Another Philosopher said: "our dry Earth does not bear any fruit if it is not profoundly soaked in its Rain Water. Oyr dry Earth has a great thirst, when it begins to drink, it drinks down to the dregs". Another said: "Our Earth drinks the fertile water that it awaited, it quenches its thirst, then it produces hundreds of fruits". One finds many similar passage in the books of the Philosophers, but they are in the form of parables, so that the evil cannot understand them. By the Grace of God, you now possess our white foliated Earth, all ready to undergo the fermentation, which will give it breath. Also the Philosophers said: "Whiten the black Earth before uniting it with the ferment". Another said: "Sow your gold in the white foliated Earth.. and it will give you fruit an hundredfold. Glory to God. Amen."

We pass to the third operation which is the fermentation of the white Earth. It is necessary to animate and revive the dead body, in order to multiply its strength to infinity, and to cause it to pass to the state of the perfect white elixir which changes the Mercury to the genuine and perfect Moon. Note that the ferment cannot penetrate the dead body, that by the intermediary of the water the marriage is made and the bond set between the white earth and the ferment. This is why in all fermentation, it is necessary to note the weight of each thing. If then you want to set the white Earth aside to ferment in order

to change it to the white Elixir containing an excess of the tincture, it is necessary to take three parts of the white Earth or dead foliated Body, two parts of the Water-of-Life, that you put in reserve and one-half part of the ferment.

Prepare the ferment in such a way that it is reduced to a white lime, bound and fixed, if you want to make the white elixir. If you want to make the red Elixir, condense the lime (=calx) of the very yellow gold, prepared according to Art. There are no other ferments like these here. The ferment of silver is silver, the ferment of gold is gold, therefore don't look elsewhere! The reason for this is that the two bodies are luminous, they contain the brilliant lights which communicate to the other bodies true redness and whiteness. They are of one nature, similar to that of sulphur, the purest of the matter of this type of Stone. Extract then, each kind from its own kind, each family (species) from its own family. The work of the white (albedo) has as a goal, to whiten; the work of the red, to redden. Above all, do NOT mix the two Works, otherwise nothing will work well.

All the Philosophers say that our stone is composed of three things: The Body, the Spirit and the Soul .Now the white Earth is the Body, the ferment is the Soul, which gives it its life, the intermediary water is the spirit.Reunite these three things in one by marriage, digesting them well over an appropriate (clean) stone, so as to unite them in their smallest particles, to form, from it a confused chaos.When you have made a single body of all, put it carefully in a special flask which you will place over its hot bed, so that the mixture coagulates, fixes and becomes

white. You will take the blessed white stone, you will pulverize it finely over a very clean stone, soak it with a third of its weight of water to slake its thirst. Then return it to the clear and clean flask placed over its soft and hot bed so that it commences to sweat and to yeild its water, and finally you will leave its entrails to dry. Repeat often until you have prepared by this procedure our very excellent fixed white Stone, which penetrates the tiniest part of the bodies very rapidly, flowing like the fixed water when one puts it over the fire, changing the imperfect bodies to genuine silver, quite comparable to natural silver. Note that if you often repeat all the operations in the same order: to dissolve, to coagulate, to pulverize, to digest, your medicine will be so much the better, its excellence increasing more and more. Furthermore, you will work your Stone in order to increase the virtue, and more, you will have the yeild when you make the projection upon imperfect bodies. In a way so that after one operation, one part of the Elixir transmutes one hundred parts of whatever body to the Moon, after two operations one thousand, after three, ten thousand, after four, one hundred thousand and so on , ad infinitum. Also the adepts praise all the great maxims of the Philosophers about the perserverance to repeat this operation. If one imbibition was sufficient, they would not have had so much to say upon the subject. Grace be given unto God. Amen.

If you desire to change the glorious stone, this white King which transmutes and tints the Mercury and all the imperfect bodies into the true Moon, if you desire, I say, to change it to the red stone which tints and transmutes the Mercury, the Moon and the other metals to the true Sun, operate thusly: Take the White

Stone and divide it into two parts; you will raise one part to the state of the white Elixir, as has been said much earlier. (of the kind of which you will have an indefinite amount) .Put the other part in a new bed of the Philosophers, clean, tidy, transparent, spherical and place it in the furnace for digestion. Increase the fire until by its force and strength the matter is changed to a very red stone, that the Philosophers call Blood, purple, red coral or red sulphur. When you see this color so that the red is as bright as that of the dry calcined crocus, then take the King joyously, put it aside very carefully. If you want to change it to the red Elixir, a tincture of great strength, transmuting and tinging the Mercury, the Moon and all other imperfect metal bodies, to the very genuine Sun, bring to ferment three parts with one and a half parts of very pure gold, to the state of and very yellow, and two parts of solidified water, Make of it a perfect mixture according to the rules of Art, until it no longer is possible to distinguish the components. Put it again in a flask over a matured fire in order to perfect it. As soon as the true Stone appears blood red, you will gradually add the solid Water.

Slowly increase the fire of digestion. By repeating this operation, you will increase its perfection. It is necessary to add, each time, the solid Water (that you preserved), which draws to its nature; it multiplies its strength to infinity, without changing anything of its essence. One part of the perfect Elixir of the first degree, projected over one hundred parts of the Mercury (washed with some vinegar and some salt as you should know), placed in a crucible over a small fire, until smoke ap-

pears, immediately transmutes them to the genuine Sun, better than the natural. The same in replacing Mercury by the Moon. For each degree of perfection, from most of the Elixir, it is the same thing as that for the white Elixir, until it tints it finally to the Sun of the infinite quantities of the Mercury and the Moon. You now possess a precious secret, an infinite treasure. This is why the Philosophers say: "Our stone has three colors, it is black at the outset, white in the middle, red at the end". A Philosopher said: "The heat works first on the humidity to produce the blackness, its action on the dry produces the white and on the white produces the red. Thus the whiteness is nothing other than the complete absence of blackness. The white skilfully condensed by the force of the fire produces the red". -- "All you seekers who work the Art", said another sage, "When you see the white appear in the vessel, know that the red is hidden in the white. It is necessary that you extract it from it and for this to heat forcefully until the appearance of the red".

FINIS



The Humid Path.